

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of conducting a game of chance comprising:
configuring a bonus game for play by a plurality of players, wherein a final outcome in the bonus game is determined at least partially by at least one of skill, strategy and knowledge of at least one player of the plurality and a bonus pool generated at least in part through wagers placed for play of a primary game is awarded based on a final winning outcome; and
providing at least one opportunity for the plurality of players to each play the primary game and to be enabled for play of the bonus game, wherein at least one player of the plurality achieves the final winning outcome and at least a portion of the bonus pool is awarded to at least one player achieving the final outcome.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising initiating the bonus game with at least one qualified player and playing the bonus game to the final winning outcome, wherein the winning final outcome in the bonus game is determined at least partially by at least one of skill, strategy and knowledge of the at least one qualified player.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein enablement for play of the bonus game is associated with play of the primary game.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein play of the bonus game is at least partially enabled by at least one of the following events associated with play of the primary game:
achieving at least one specific outcome during play of the primary game;
achieving an accumulation of specific outcomes during play of the primary game;
playing the primary game a specific number of times;
playing the primary game a plurality of times for a specific duration of time; and
wagering a specific sum over a plurality of plays of the primary game.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the at least one event that enables play of the bonus game is calculated to maintain a net return of the house.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the enablement for play of the bonus game is calculated to maintain a net return of the house.

7. The method of claim 2, further including configuring the bonus game so that a net return of the house in the primary game is independent of the at least one of skill, strategy and knowledge of the at least one qualified player.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising generating the bonus pool by adding a fixed number of credits for each qualified entry in a round of bonus game play.

9. The method of claim 2, further comprising simultaneously providing a plurality of bonus games and allowing the at least one qualified player to choose one of the plurality of bonus games to play.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising enabling a plurality of qualified players to play the bonus game as a team.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising configuring the bonus game as at least one of a trivia game, a phrase-guessing game, and a maze.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising implementing the bonus game as a physical embodiment.

13. The method of claim 11, further comprising implementing the bonus game as an electronic embodiment.



14. The method of claim 2, wherein the bonus game is a trivia game and the final winning outcome is determined by the at least one qualified player correctly answering at least one question posed in the bonus game.
15. The method of claim 14, further comprising either awarding the bonus pool to one winning player or partially dividing the bonus pool between a plurality of winning players.
16. The method of claim 14, wherein difficulty of the at least one question is determined by a status in the bonus game of the at least one qualified player.
17. The method of claim 2, wherein the bonus game is a phrase-guessing game and the final outcome is determined by at least one of the at least one qualified player achieving a highest number of points or solving a phrase.
18. The method of claim 17, further comprising either awarding the bonus pool to one winning player or partially dividing the bonus pool between winning players.
19. The method of claim 2, wherein the bonus game is a maze and the final winning outcome is determined by the at least one qualified player solving the maze.
20. The method of claim 1, further comprising enabling play of a primary game and the bonus game by each of a plurality of players at a respective plurality of gaming machines.
21. The method of claim 20, further comprising networking a plurality of gaming machines at least for play of the bonus game.
22. The method of claim 21, further comprising networking the plurality of gaming machines for purposes of enabling play of the bonus game.

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23. The method of claim 20, wherein enabling play of a primary game by each of the plurality of players comprises enabling play of the same primary game at each of the respective plurality of gaming machines.

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising enabling play of the primary game and the bonus game at a plurality of mutually remote sites through a communication link.

25. A method of conducting a game of chance comprising:
configuring a bonus game for play by a plurality of players, wherein a final winning outcome in the bonus game is determined at least partially by at least one of skill, strategy and knowledge of at least one player of the plurality;
generating a bonus pool in association with wagers placed for play of a primary game, wherein a net return of the house in the primary game is independent of the at least one of skill, strategy and knowledge of the at least one player; and
providing at least one opportunity for the plurality of players to each play the primary game and to be enabled for play of the bonus game, wherein the final winning outcome in the bonus game is achieved by at least one player of the plurality.

26. The method of claim 25, further comprising initiating the bonus game with at least one qualified player and playing the bonus game to the final winning outcome, wherein the final winning outcome in the bonus game is determined at least partially by at least one of skill, knowledge, or strategy of the at least one qualified player.

27. The method of claim 25, wherein enablement for play of the bonus game is associated with play of the primary game.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein play of the bonus game is at least partially enabled by at least one of the following events associated with play of the primary game:
achieving at least one specific outcome during play of the primary game;
achieving an accumulation of specific outcomes during play of the primary game;
playing the primary game a specific number of times;
playing the primary game a plurality of times for a specific duration of time; and
wagering a specific sum over a plurality of plays of the primary game.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the at least one event that enables play of the bonus game is calculated to maintain a net return of the house.

30. The method of claim 25, wherein the enablement for play of the bonus game is calculated to maintain the net return of the house.

31. The method of claim 25, wherein generating the bonus pool in association with wagers for play of a primary game comprises allocating a fixed number of credits for each qualified entry in the bonus game.

32. The method of claim 26, further comprising simultaneously providing a plurality of bonus games and allowing the at least one qualified player to choose one of the plurality of bonus games to play.

33. The method of claim 25, further comprising configuring the bonus game as at least one of a trivia game, a phrase-guessing game, and a maze.

34. The method of claim 25, further comprising implementing the bonus game as a physical embodiment.

35. The method of claim 25, further comprising implementing the bonus game as an electronic embodiment.

36. A system for conducting a game of chance, comprising:
a plurality of gaming machines each configured for play of a primary game by a plurality of players and networked for play of a bonus game, wherein a final winning outcome in the bonus game is determined at least partially by skill of at least one player of the plurality and a bonus pool generated at least in part by wagers associated with play of the primary game is awarded responsive to the final winning outcome; and
apparatus networked to each of the plurality of gaming machines and configured with the bonus game for play by the plurality of players.

37. The system of claim 36, wherein the apparatus is configured to initiate the bonus game with a plurality of qualified players, conduct play of the bonus game to the final winning outcome based at least partially on the skill of at least one qualified player, and award the bonus pool to the at least one qualified player who achieves the final winning outcome.

38. The system of claim 36, wherein each gaming machine of the plurality is configured to enable play of the bonus game in association with play of the primary game with which that gaming machine is configured.

39. The system of claim 38, wherein each gaming machine of the plurality is configured to enable play of the bonus game at least partially by at least one of the following events associated with play of the primary game with which that gaming machine is configured:
achieving at least one specific outcome during play of the primary game;
achieving an accumulation of specific outcomes during play of the primary game;
playing the primary game a specific number of times;
playing the primary game a plurality of times for a specific duration of time; and
wagering a specific sum over a plurality of plays of the primary game.

40. The system of claim 36, wherein the bonus game is configured to generate the bonus pool by adding a fixed number of credits for each qualified player in the bonus game.
41. The system of claim 39, wherein the bonus game is configured so that the at least one event that enables play of the bonus game is calculated to maintain a net return of the house in the primary game.
42. The system of claim 37, wherein the bonus game is configured so that a net return of the house in the primary game is independent of the skill of the at least one qualified player.
43. The system of claim 37, wherein the bonus game is configured to simultaneously provide multiple bonus games from which the at least one qualified player may choose.
44. The system of claim 36, wherein each of the gaming machines is configured to enable each play of the primary game responsive to a wager placed by a player.
45. The system of claim 36, wherein the bonus pool in the bonus game is configured to maintain a net return of the house.
46. The system of claim 36, wherein the bonus game is at least one of a trivia game, a phrase-guessing game, and a maze game.
47. The system of claim 46, wherein the apparatus further includes structure to implement the bonus game as a physical embodiment of the at least one of a trivia game, a phrase-guessing game, or a maze game.



48. The system of claim 46, wherein the apparatus further includes structure to implement the bonus game as an electronic embodiment of at least one of a trivia game, a phrase-guessing game, or a maze game.

49. The system of claim 36, wherein at least some of the gaming machines of the plurality are configured as a bank of gaming machines at a single location.

50. The system of claim 36, wherein at least some of the gaming machines of the plurality are located at a plurality of mutually remote sites.

51. The system of claim 50, wherein at least some of the mutually remote sites comprise sites other than casinos.

52. The system of claim 36, wherein at least some of the gaming machines of the plurality comprise personal computers, PDAs, or wireless terminals.

53. The system of claim 36, wherein the apparatus comprises a bonus event computer programmed to implement the bonus game.

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